Messius Phoebus Severus

(fl. c. 469 – c. 470)

BRIEFING

Messius Phoebus Severus (*floruit* 469–470) was a Roman politician and philosopher. He was appointed consul with Flavius Iordanes for 470.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Rome, he studied at the school of the neoplatonist philosopher Proclus, in Alexandria; among the other students there were the Pagan poet Pamprepius (who was instrumental in the revolt of Illus), the military officer Marcellinus (later semi-autonomous commander in Illyricum), the noble Anthemius (Consul and Western Roman Emperor), and Illustrius Pusaeus (Praetorian prefect of the East in 465 and Consul in 467). During this period, a pause in his career after he had become disillusioned with public life, he received some scholars who were interested in his rich library.

In 467/469 Severus returned to Rome, where the Western Emperor Anthemius elevated him to the honour of the consulate in the year 470, as well as gave him the rank of *Patricius* and the office of *Praefectus urbi*. According to Damascius, Severus and Anthemius had a secret plan to restore the Pagan cults. During his office, he restored parts of the Colosseum.